



# **Department of Commerce Occupational Safety and Health Report**

**DECEMBER 2003**

# **Occupational Safety and Health Report**

## **December 2003**

### **Introduction**

This report provides an update to Department of Commerce (DOC) managers and employees on the progress of Departmental safety and occupational health initiatives and information regarding important Department-wide safety and occupational health issues for November 2003. The report also contains the latest available accident data for the Department. Section One of the report, Program Updates, provides updates on the safety and occupational health initiatives. Section Two, Injury Statistics, provides statistics regarding Department injuries, as reported to the Workers' Compensation Program for November 2003, and an analysis of the data to assist bureaus in focusing their safety efforts. Section Three, Survey Results, provides the December results from the on-line survey available through the intranet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program Web Site.

### **Section One: Program Updates**

The Office of Occupational Safety and Health (OOSH) has modified its website at <http://ohrm.doc.gov> to reflect the six pillars of the OOSH: 1) Occupational Health, 2) Safety, 3) Industrial Hygiene, 4) Health and Wellness, 5) Workers' Compensation, and 6) Emergency Response and Preparedness. These are the key OSH programs to promote Secretary Evans' commitment to "providing a safe working environment, preventing accidents, and minimizing illness." Additionally, OOSH has modified and updated the Occupational Safety and Health Council section of the OOSH website. Posted on the website is the latest OSH Council Slide presentation, meeting minutes, and the schedule for the next OSH Council meeting. This website may be accessed at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/safetyprogram/MonthlySafetyCouncil.htm>.

As part of the Office of Human Resources Management's (OHRM) efforts to explore existing technologies to support standardized OSH assessments and oversight, the OOSH staff invited Northrop Grumman to brief and demonstrate its Environmental Safety and Occupational Health Management Information System (ESOH MIS). The ESOH MIS is a web-based ESOH tool used and funded by Department of Defense to standardize, document, and archive comprehensive ESOH information. OHRM is working with Northrop Grumman to evaluate the OSH portals of the system for small-scale OSH assessments to assist with the Department's operational safety and health responsibilities within HCHB.

OOSH has identified three areas of improvement for the workers' compensation program that will enhance overall fiscal and operational outcomes of the Department. These opportunities are: 1) long-term case management contract, 2) DOC physician review of workers' compensation claims, and 3) workers' compensation fraud, waste and abuse. Currently, OHRM is pursuing

contracting long-term cases with the existing workers' compensation contract, initiating physician review of workers' compensation cases with the current health unit contract to assist with controverting long and short-term claims, and exploring methods to identify workers' compensation fraud, waste and abuse.

The next Commerce Safety and Occupational Health Council meeting will be held on January 8, 2004 at 1:30 p.m. in room 4830 in the Hoover Building. The key topics to be discussed will focus on short term and long-term DOC OOSH initiatives and open items from the October 23, 2003, OSH Council.

## **Section Two: Injury Statistics and Analysis**

This section provides information on the total number of Departmental injuries for the past five years and analyzes the types of injuries across the Department. The information in Chart 2 reflects statistics through November 2003. Due to late submissions, processing limitations and to ensure the accuracy of the information, this section will continue to include information up to the previous month. The data presented in the charts and tables are based upon Departmental Workers' Compensation Program records.

***Incidence Rate:*** The incidence rate (IR) represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and is calculated as follows:

$$IR = \frac{N}{EH} (200,000)$$

N	=	Number of injuries and illnesses
EH	=	Total hours worked by all employees during the year <sup>1</sup>
200,000	=	Base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

<sup>1</sup> The total hours worked were determined based on the total number of employees and the average hours.

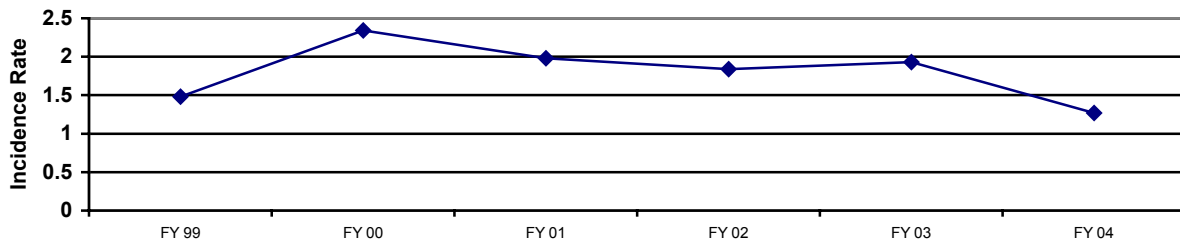
The Commerce Workers' Compensation Program keeps records on all injury and illness claims, including those that did not include any lost work time. An accounting of all incidents allows follow-up and more comprehensive program review by safety representatives. However, the incident rates from those records are not directly comparable, since they include many minor injuries and illnesses that are not considered "work-related" under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for private industry. Injury rates may be skewed as safety awareness increases and employees are encouraged to report all injuries, causing total injury rates to increase despite improvements to safety. Using standardized OSHA recordable incident reporting helps to reduce inconsistent reporting. An OSHA recordable incident is a

work-related injury or illness that resulted in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, loss of consciousness, or death.

**Table 1A provides data that corresponds to the OSHA recordable injury criteria. The remaining tables and charts include data for all cases submitted to the Workers' Compensation Program.**

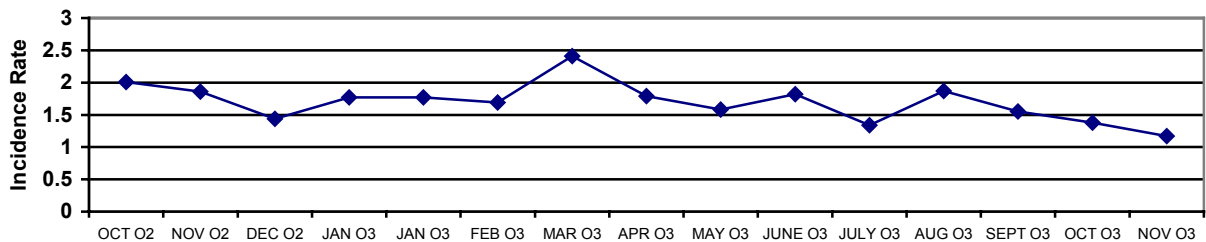
**Chart 1**

**Historical Total Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)**



**Chart 2**

**Monthly for Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)**



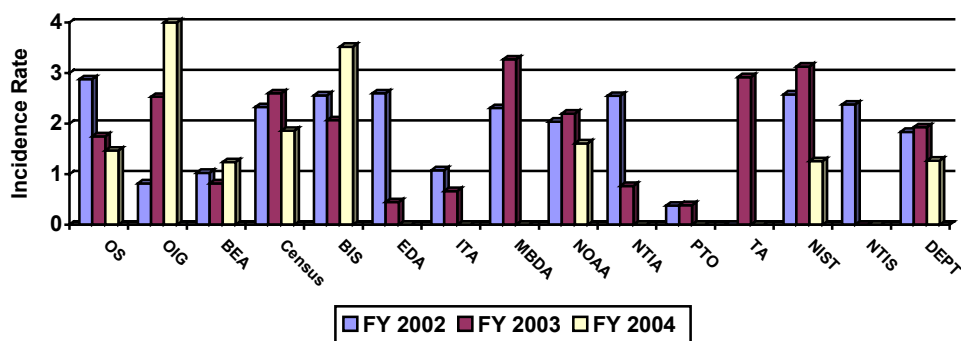
Major Findings include:

- **The FY 2004 Total Case Incidence Rate (TCIR) to date for Commerce is down from the rate for FY 2003 and FY 2002.** The TCIR is 1.27 (see Chart 1) for FY 2004, 1.93 for FY 2003, and 1.84 for FY 2002. A total of 72 total injuries were reported thus far for FY 2004 (see Table 1).

- Of the larger bureaus, the Bureau of Census and The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) had lower TCIRs to date for FY 2004 when compared to FY 2003.
- Of the smaller bureaus (i.e., bureaus with less than 500 employees), only four injuries were reported to date in FY 2004.
- The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate (TRCIR) for Commerce is down from previous years. The TRCIRs for Commerce are 0.99 for FY 2004, 1.48 for FY 2003 and 1.60 for FY 2002 (see Table 1A).

Chart 3

## Total Case Incidence Rate Comparison (TCIR)



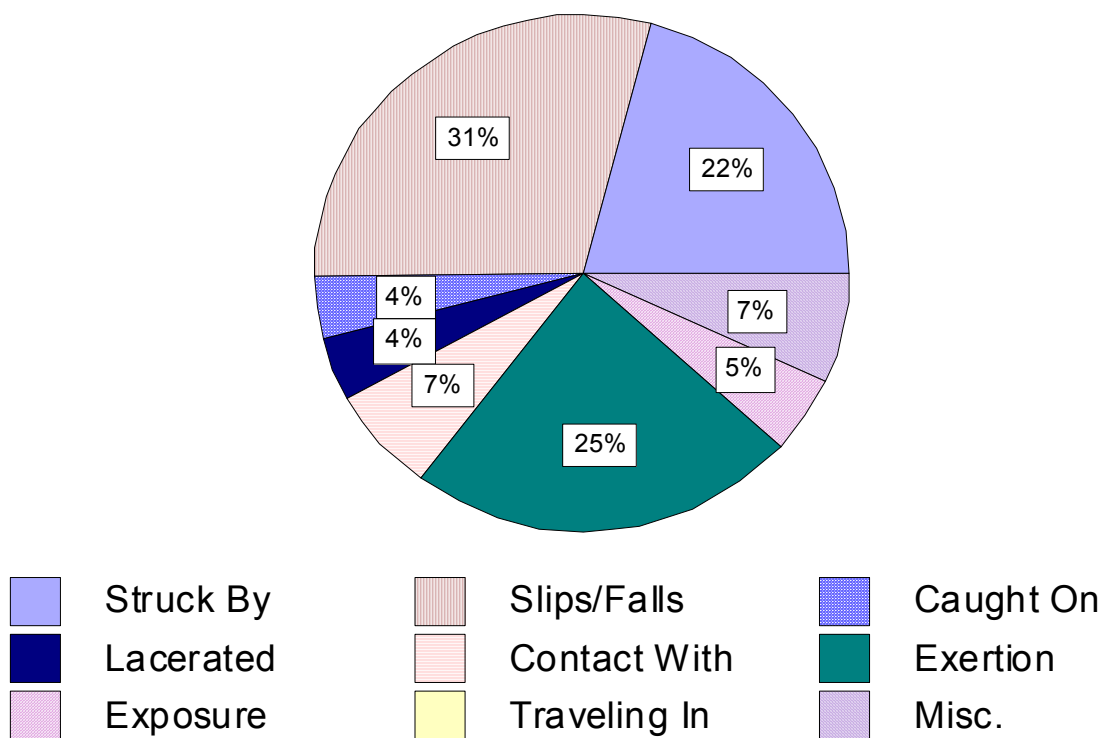
**Types of Injuries:** Many of the injuries reported can be prevented through improved safety awareness and proper maintenance. A Departmental and bureau focus on eliminating injuries and illnesses continues to be essential. Evaluating the types of claims submitted and structuring safety awareness training programs to eliminate accidents can assist in the mitigation of injuries and illnesses. Information on types of injuries is provided in charts 4 and 5 and tables 2 and 2A.

- “Struck By” injuries were the most prevalent type of injury in November 2003 (see Chart 5). “Struck By” injuries accounted for 22 percent of those reported for FY 2003 (see Chart 4) and 31 percent in November 2003. Many of the struck by injuries were caused by objects in the workplace not being secured or stored correctly.

- **“Exertion” injuries accounted for 25 percent of all injuries within the Department for FY 2003 and for 30 percent in November 2003.** Pushing, lifting and moving heavy objects still account for most of the exertion injuries. Employees should use a cart to move heavy objects and/or ask for assistance.

**“Slips/Falls” injuries remain a concern and accounted for 31 percent of all injuries in FY 2003 (see Chart 4). The numbers have increased from last month, October 2003, and account for 27% of injuries reported in November 2003 (see Chart 5).** Again, most slips and falls were due to walking surfaces, e.g., wet floors due to weather and spillage, etc. Therefore, we reiterate and ask that all DOC employees be more attentive and aware of walking surfaces to help reduce injuries from slips and falls.

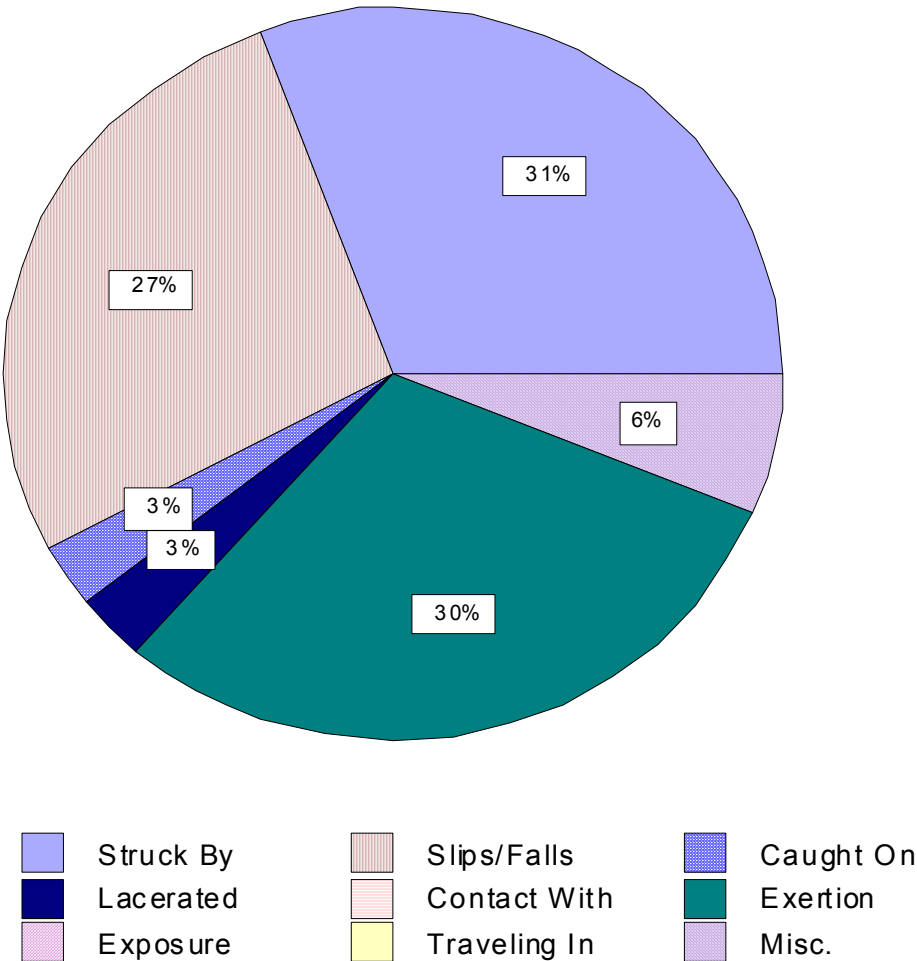
**Chart 4**



**Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries for FY 2003**

**Chart 5**  
**Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries**

**NOVEMBER 03**



**TABLE 1**  
**TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATE\* (TCIR)**

Bureau	FY1999		FY2000		FY2001		FY2002		FY2003		October 2003		November 2003		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	35	3.94	22	2.47	23	2.88	14	1.75	1	1.48	1	1.47	2	1.47
Office of Inspector General	2	1.32	4	2.98	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	1	9.88	1	4.94
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	1	0.23	5	1.12	4	1.03	4	0.82	1	2.45	0	0	1	1.24
Bureau of the Census	311	1.04	383	2.83	393	2.41	241	2.33	252	2.60	15	1.86	15	1.86	30	1.86
Bureau of Industry and Security	11	3.08	15	4.06	9	2.44	9	2.56	7	2.07	1	3.57	1	3.52	2	3.52
Economic Development Administration	9	3.67	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	1	0.45	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	18	0.92	24	1.23	12	0.62	18	1.08	11	0.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	3	3.40	4	4.36	2	2.31	3	3.27	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	317	2.78	307	2.69	247	2.18	228	2.04	246	2.20	16	1.72	14	1.50	30	1.61
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	7	3.03	6	2.55	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	27	0.47	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	84	2.87	79	2.82	68	2.34	76	2.58	90	3.13	5	2.10	1	0.42	6	1.26
National Technical Information Service	6	2.61	4	2.15	1	0.52	4	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1.38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1.27</b>
<b>Decennial Census 2000</b>	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

\* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.



**TABLE 1A**  
**TOTAL RECORDABLE CASE INCIDENCE RATE\* (TRCIR)**

Bureau	FY1999		FY 2000		FY2001		FY 2002		FY2003		October 2003		November 2003		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	30	3.38	17	1.91	22	2.75	12	1.50	1	1.48	1	1.47	2	1.47
Office of Inspector General	1	0.66	3	2.24	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	1	9.88	1	4.94
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	0	0	5	1.12	3	0.77	3	0.62	1	2.45	0	0	1	1.24
Bureau of the Census	288	0.96	345	2.55	332	2.04	212	2.05	184	1.90	13	1.61	10	1.24	23	1.43
Bureau of Industry and Security	10	2.80	13	3.52	8	2.17	9	2.56	7	2.07	1	3.57	0	0	1	1.76
Economic Development Administration	8	3.26	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	17	0.86	22	1.13	11	0.57	10	0.60	11	0.67	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	2	2.27	4	4.36	2	2.31	2	2.18	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	275	2.41	289	2.53	225	1.98	203	1.81	196	1.75	14	1.50	13	1.39	27	1.45
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	5	2.16	3	1.27	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	26	0.45	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	76	2.60	66	2.36	55	1.89	59	2.00	58	2.01	1	0.42	0	0	1	0.21
National Technical Information Service	5	2.18	4	2.15	1	0.52	3	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0.99</b>
<b>Decennial Census 2000</b>	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

\* The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate includes only those injuries or illnesses that are reportable to OSHA under 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1904.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Reported Case Incidence Rate.

**Table 2**

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU  
AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES  
(Through November 2003)**

BUREAU	NOAA			CENSUS			NIST			PTO			ITA			OS			TOTAL
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	
Struck By/Against An Object	29	55	10	27	45	9	8	26	3	4	5	0	1	3	0	2	3	0	230
Falls/Slips	59	59	4	96	96	9	22	21	1	7	12	0	7	6	0	2	2	1	404
Caught On An Object	5	12	1	8	3	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	40
Cuts/Bites	26	5	0	19	19	1	9	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	85
Contact With An Object	19	5	0	11	5	1	6	0	0	6	4	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	60
Exertion/ Motion	64	73	10	37	51	9	17	22	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	1	8	1	299
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	9	9	0	6	18	0	3	3	0	1	0	0	6	1	0	12	0	0	68
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	10	0	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Miscellaneous*	7	22	5	21	10	1	8	8	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	89
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1302</b>

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

\*\* Decennial Census claims were omitted to provide a clearer picture of injury trends

**Table 2A**

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU  
AGENCIES WITH LESS THAN 500 EMPLOYEES  
(Through November 2003)**

BUREAU	OIG			ESA/BEA			EDA			TA			NTIS			NTIA			MBDA			BIS			Total	
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04		
Struck By/Against An Object	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	9	
Falls/Slips	0	1	0	2	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	0	18	
Caught On An Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	
Cuts/Bites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Contact with an Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	5	
Exertion/ Motion	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	14
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Miscellaneous*	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	
Total	1	3	1	4	4	1	6	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	6	2	0	2	3	0	9	7	2	57	

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

### Section Three: Survey Results

We continue to receive comments through the Safety Survey website. We are using employee comments to help shape a safety program responsive to employee issues and concerns. The website can be accessed through the OHRM homepage at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>.

#### *Safety Survey Statistics*

We received 175 responses to December's survey. The following tables provide some data regarding the distribution of responses by bureau and general geographical area, as well as general safety impressions. The occupational safety and health survey provides feedback from the DOC community we serve and provides an additional insight on whether or not Departmental occupational safety and health programs and initiatives are active.

**Table 3a**  
**Safety Survey**  
**December Results**

Have you experienced a safety lapse in your work area during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	157	89.71%
Yes	18	10.29%

**Table 3b**  
**Safety Survey**  
**November Results**

Have you noticed any safety improvements in your work area or in the Department as a whole during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	118	67.82%
Yes	56	32.18%

**Table 3b indicates the continued perception that there is a lack of safety improvements within the Department. Over 89.77% of these concerns are associated with the Department's four major bureaus NOAA, CENSUS, PTO and NIST respectively (see Table 3d).**

This issue will be introduced at the January 8, 2004, Occupational Safety and Health Council meeting where the major bureaus will be charged to develop a method to respond and

track issues related to the safety survey.

**Table 3c**  
**Safety Survey**  
**November Results by Geographic Area**

Geographical Location		
State	Count	Percent
AK	3	1.70%
AR	1	0.57%
CA	6	3.41%
CO	12	6.82%
CT	1	0.57%
DC	19	10.80%
FL	7	3.98%
HI	1	0.57%
IA	3	1.70%
ID	2	1.14%
IN	4	2.27%
KS	4	2.27%
MA	1	0.57%
MD	55	31.25%
MI	3	1.70%
MO	1	0.57%
NC	4	2.27%
NY	3	1.70%
OH	1	0.57
OR	1	0.57
PA	2	1.14%

RI	1	0.57%
TX	4	2.27%
UT	1	0.57%
VA	22	12.50%
WA	13	7.39%
WI	1	0.57%

**Table 3d**  
**Safety Survey**  
**November Results by Bureau/Agency**

Bureau Breakdown		
Answer	Count	Percent
BEA	1	0.57%
CENSUS	39	22.16%
CFO/ASA	1	0.57%
ESA	1	0.57%
ITA	8	4.55%
NIST	17	9.66%
NOAA	82	46.59%
NTIA	2	1.14%
OGC	1	0.57%
OS	3	1.70%
PTO	20	11.36%
TA	1	0.57%